[Translation]

Pollution in Narmada River

*85. SHRI DADA BABURAO PARANJPE : Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state:

(a) the number of factories causing pollution in the water of the Narmada river;

(b) the steps taken by the Central Government to prevent the pollution in the Narmada river so far;

(c) whether the Government have formulated any scheme to make the entire water of the Narmada free from pollution; and

(d) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (PROF. SAIFUDDIN SOZ) : (a) The river Narmada originates from Amarkantak district in Madhya Pradesh and after passing through Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra and Gujarat meets the Gulf of Khambat. According to the report received from the Maharashtra State Pollution Control Board, the river does not receive trade effluents in Maharashtra. As per the report received from the Madhya Pradesh State Pollution Control Board, there are a total of 20 factories located in the catchment area of the river Narmada in Madhya Pradesh and there is no regular discharge from any of these units into the river directly. However, the municipal sewage of Jabalpur is discharged into the river without any treatment. According to the report received from the Central Pollution Control Board, there are two grossly polluting industries in Ankleshwar and two large Industrial Estates, one in Ankleshwar and the other in Panoli which are reported to be polluting the river Narmada in Gujarat. The effluent treatment plants in the two individual industries are not reported to be operating satisfactorily. State Pollution Control Board has reported that one Common Effluent Treatment Plant (CETP) has been set up for treating the effluent discharged by about 100 small scale industries of Ankleshwar.

(b) to (d) Directions have been issued by the Central Pollution Control Board on 14.7.1997 under Section 18(1) (b) of the Water (Prevention and Control of Pollution) Act, 1974 to the State Pollution Control Boards to issue notices to the defaulting industries for setting up effluent treatment plants within three months failing which closure notice shall be issued to such defaulting units. In order to control pollution of the river from municipal sewage at Jabalpur in Madhya Pradesh, the Government have approved a pollution abatement programme of river Narmada under the National river Conservation Plant at an estimated cost of Rs. 14.57 crore

[English]

Buffer Stock Norms

*86. SHRI SANAT KUMAR MANDAL
KUMARI SUSHILA TIRIYA :

Will the Minister of FOOD AND CONSUMER AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government despite their optimistic projection of foodgrains of 198.17 million tonne in 1996-97, will be able to meet the buffer stock norms;

(b) if not, the reasons therefor;

(c) the extent to which the principal commodities like wheat and rice fall short of the buffer stock norms;

(d) whether the Government have decided to import these commodities; and

(e) if so, the quantity thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF FOOD AND CONSUMER AFFAIRS (SHRI RAGHUVANS PRASAD SINGH) : (a) to (c) Based on current supply plan estimates we shall be meeting the buffer stock norms in respect of rice as on 1.10.1997, and in respect of wheat as on 1.4.1998.

(d) and (e) Government, decided to import through STC upto 20 lakh tonnes of wheat each during 1996-97 and 1997-98, of which a quantity of 17.51 lakh tonnes has already been received till May, 1997. The STC has contracted for import of another quantity of 10 lakh tonnes of wheat which is likely to be received before March, 1998.

Three-Tier Pricing System Under Revamped Public Distribution System

*87. SHRI K.H. MUNIYAPPA : Will the Minister of FOOD AND CONSUMER AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government have introduced yet another tier of foodgrains pricing under the Revamped Public Distribution System in addition to the already announced dual pricing system for the poor and the non-poor, making it a three-tiered pricing structure:

(b) if so, the details thereof: and

(c) the number of persons likely to be benefited by scheme?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF FOOD AND CONSUMER AFFAIRS (SHRI RAGHUVANS PRASAD SINGH) : (a) and (b) The Revamped Public Distribution System (RPDS) has ceased to exist with the introduction of the Targeted Public Distribution System (TPDS) with effect from 1.6.1997. Under the TPDS, there shall be two price regimes—one for the families living below poverty line (BPL) and another for families above poverty line (APL). However, if any State is made any additional allocation to meet special requirements, then the foodgrains are supplied at the Economic Cost. The details are as under:—

(Rs. per kg.)

	BPL	APL	Economic Cost
Wheat	2.50	4.50	7.62
Rice			
Common	3.50	—	8.45
Fine	3.50	6.50	8.88
Superfine	—	7.50	9.27

(c) The number of persons living below poverty line who are likely to be benefited by the Scheme is about 32.03 crores. It is not possible to estimate the number of APL beneficiaries as it is left to the States to distribute the foodgrains at a scale to be determined by them from the allotment of foodgrains made for APL families.

[Translation]

Price of Imported Wheat

*88. SHRI NAWAL KISHORE RAI
SHRI PANKAJ CHOWDHARY :

Will the Minister of FOOD AND CONSUMER AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the price of imported wheat is comparatively more than the price of the wheat procured on the support price in the domestic market;

(b) if so, the details thereof and the reasons therefor; and

(c) the reasons for import of wheat at a higher price?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF FOOD AND CONSUMER AFFAIRS (SHRI RAGHUVANS PRASAD SINGH) : (a) and (b) The estimated economic cost of imported wheat would be marginally more than the economic cost of indigenously procured wheat. The details in this regard are as under:—

	Pooled Economic Cost (Estimated) (Rs./MT)
Imported Wheat	8076.00
Indigenous Wheat	7528.30

(c) Import of wheat was undertaken to tide over the tight domestic wheat stock position and to augment the overall supply position with a view to contain the rise in prices caused by a fall in production, and the consequent lower procurement of wheat for the Central Pool during 1996-97.

[English]

Import of Inferior Wheat from Australia by STC

*89. DR. A.K. PATEL :
SHRI CHITTA BASU :

Will the Minister of FOOD AND CONSUMER AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Australian wheat imported by STC contained exotic weeds, as appeared in the 'Economic Times' dated May 20, 1997;

(b) if so, the facts of the matter reported therein;

(c) whether the STC have violated norms regarding import of wheat;

(d) if so, the reasons therefor;

(e) whether an Indian team of experts recently visited Australia to discuss the problem of contaminated wheat;

(f) if so, the details and outcome thereof;

(g) whether complaints have been received from various States regarding the sub-standard quality of wheat imported which is unfit for human consumption; and

(h) if so, the details thereof and reaction of the Government thereto?